



MONTANA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

MCIS CONNECTIONS

February 2008

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RESEARCH & ANALYSIS BUREAU
WORKFORCE SERVICES DIVISION
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY

New Tool Helps Balance Job Skills Supply/Demand

Sometimes unemployment is simply a problem of not having enough jobs, but often it is a problem of balance. "Structural Unemployment" is a term used to identify the mismatch between the skills that job seekers bring to the labor market versus the skill that employers demand. Skill imbalances (shortages or surpluses of certain skills in the labor force) cause headaches for employers and job seekers alike, leaving many positions unfilled not because the available labor pool is unskilled, but because their skills do not match the job requirements.

MCRN has just released a planning tool to address this problem: the Montana Occupational Supply Demand System. The system is geared to help a wide variety of users from job seekers to career counselors to human resources managers. On the supply side, it allows career counselors and One-Stop staff to access a list of high-wage, high-demand, high-skill occupations with one click. This will help them steer individuals towards training programs that will teach them the skills employers need.

On the demand side, employers and human resource managers can look at the education levels of their potential applicant pools. It can show program planners where the need for trained workers lies. The system can help integrate workforce development and economic development by identifying the types of training individuals are gaining and the current and future economic development planned.

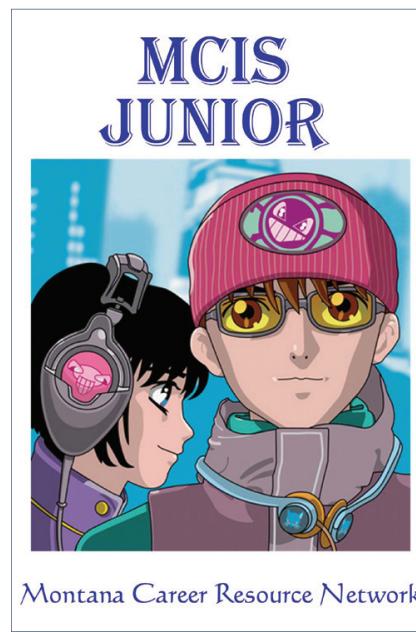
The system organizes its data by units of analysis, groups of related occupations, and related training programs. This tool will be especially helpful to schools (including postsecondary) that receive Carl Perkins IV funding. Carl Perkins IV funding to schools requires targeting programs that address high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations.

The Montana Occupational Supply Demand System can be accessed through the MCRN website: www.ourfactsyourfuture.org.

When we at MCRN started receiving requests for additional MCIS Junior Guides from teachers who had given theirs to students, we realized they could be a great resource for students as well as teachers. The only problem was the book was not geared toward students. That is why we have created a new version of the guide specifically with students in mind. The MCIS Jr. Workbook helps students find their way through the MCIS Jr. website and the career development process.

MCIS Junior is a fun and educational career exploration tool, designed specifically for middle school students. MCIS Junior includes activities to help students get to know themselves, their interests, dreams, preferences, and skills, as well as the world of work, and how to turn this knowledge into a career or educational plan. Occupational

NEW! MCIS Junior Workbook!



information is presented with 7th-8th graders in mind, and is organized both by occupation and the 16 Career Clusters.

Occupational and Career Cluster information contains real world interviews and videos, as well as information on skills needed, how to prepare, high school courses to take, wages, advancement opportunities, working conditions, work locations, and job projections.

MCIS Junior also contains an electronic interest inventory and portfolio capabilities. Students can save their results and information, and develop their own educational and high school plans.

If you are interested using the MCIS Junior Workbooks with your students, please contact Donetta Clark at 1-800-541-3904 or by email at doclark@mt.gov.

FAFSA On-Line Training

FAFSA line-by-line training and PowerPoint are available on the College Goal Sunday website at www.collegegoalsundayusa.org/support/presentation2.asp. The website also provides the FAFSA On The Web (FOTW) line-by-line presentation in English and in Spanish.

New MCIS Access Portal

MCRN is committed to continual improvement in order to provide the most user-friendly and quality career information possible. To this end, we have developed a new MCIS access portal that gives you all the MCIS site types on one page. You can choose from MCIS Junior, High School, Adult, and the Administrative site from this new portal page without having to access separate login sites. The new portal page is available at: <http://mtcis.intocareers.org>.



Middle School



High School



College



Adult



Administration Tools

Career Plan Feature Now Available in MCIS



MCIS proudly presents its latest feature: My Career Plan. This new feature is located within the Portfolio function. **My Career Plan** leads the user through the career development process organized around five sections. Each section includes suggested activities that help you answer the questions posed in the section. The answers to the questions create the user's plan.

Depending upon where the user is in their career development, they will be able to choose from three levels of activities:

- **Getting Started** - Activities for you to use to begin your plan.
- **Looking Deeper** - Activities to help you expand and update your plan as you explore your dreams.
- **Preparing for Next Steps** - Activities that focus on getting ready for your life and learning after high school

Building a personal career and education plan will help the user set goals and update them along the way. Whether you want to go to college, get a job, or follow some other route to your future, the journey will be more successful following these simple steps.

Earn a Free Night's Lodging at MEA-MFT Educators' Conference

Just like you, your peers want to hear how other educators are actually using MCRN resources in the classroom. Here's your chance to tell them and get a free night's lodging in the process.

Submit a proposal to present a session on The Real Game or other MCRN resource, and when your proposal is accepted, send a copy of the accepted session to Shaunda Hildebrand to get a free night of lodging in Missoula.

To submit a proposal, go to the MEA-MFT website for the conference and select "Online Applications" (<http://www.mea-mft.org/edconf08.html>). Proposals must be submitted to MEA-MFT by May 15, 2008.

E-mail or fax your accepted MEA-MFT Educators' Conference session to Shaunda Hildebrand at shildebrand@mt.gov or (406)444-2638.

New MCRN/MCIS Brochure Available



Now available at www.ourfactsyourfuture.org, the MCRN/MCIS Brochure provides a quick overview of the resources and features available through MCIS, MCIS Junior, and the MCIS optional components. The brochure also lists MCRN's publications and other resources by age groups. Brochures can be viewed and printed from our website, or contact us at (406) 444-2430 or toll free at (800) 541-3904 to order hard copies.





Practice Makes Perfect

(Or At Least Better)

Studies have shown that students who practice what they've learned increase their mastery of the subject and thus improve their test scores. This is also true of students who take practice tests for the SAT and ACT.

SAF provides free practice tests for ACT and SAT to Montana students through their SmartAboutCollege.org website. Using this valuable resource, every Montana student has the opportunity to increase their testing success.

Additionally, schools can purchase test packages through MCIS to give students the chance to practice other tests as well. The Civil Service practice tests option (includes tests for Firefighters, Police Officers, Real Estate Agents, State Troopers, and more) is \$200 per site, and the Academic Practice Test Package I (PSAT, GED, CLEP, SAT, ACT, and ASVAB) or the Academic Practice Test Package II (SAT subject matter, AP, and TOEFL tests) will cost \$225 per site for up to 200 students, \$275 per site for 201 - 500 students and \$325 for 501+ student sites.

However, if a school opts to add any of these components after January 1st, they can choose to either pay 2/3 of the annual license fee for the remainder of the school year, or pay 1.5 times the annual license and keep the component active from the date of purchase through the end of the following school year.

To add any of these optional components to your MCIS site, please contact Shaunda Hildebrand or Donetta Clark at 1-800-541-3904.

MCRN is currently developing a 7th-8th grade and a 3rd-4th grade career development workbook. The 3rd-4th grade workbooks will contain activities to improve career awareness while also meeting academic standards.

Real Game Pilot

On-line Project

Three Montana schools will be participating in a national pilot project for The Real Game. Cindy Brady of Lincoln Public School, Lisa Kuehn of Terry Public School, Fawn Thibodeaux of Havre High School, Lois Brott of Heart Butte School, and Mary Machart of Culbertson School have all signed up to participate in the Real Game On-line Pilot Project. These schools will try out Real Game activities and resources on-line to help them to better tailor the program to meet their students' needs.

The Real Game On-line Project was first released in Canada last fall and now is being pilot tested in the United States. It is very exciting to have Montana schools included in the national pilot project.

November Real Game Training Gets High Marks

Over 25 people from across the state came together in November at Carroll College to complete train-the-trainer training for The Real Game. Vicki Gray, a master-level trainer from New York, provided everyone with excellent training, great resources, and a solid base to start using The Real Game in the classroom. Vicki received very high marks from the participants.

MCRN would like to thank everyone who participated and we hope that you have been successful in applying The Real Game training in your classrooms. MCRN would also like to thank GearUp, SAF, and JMG for their support of The Real Game.

In the Works

The 7th-8th grade workbooks will provide career information to aid the student in planning for high school and beyond. Both workbooks will be cross-walked to Montana Educational Standards.

Web sites provide Montana youth with tools to get to college

It's one thing for a student to want to go to college.

It's another thing to realize that dream.

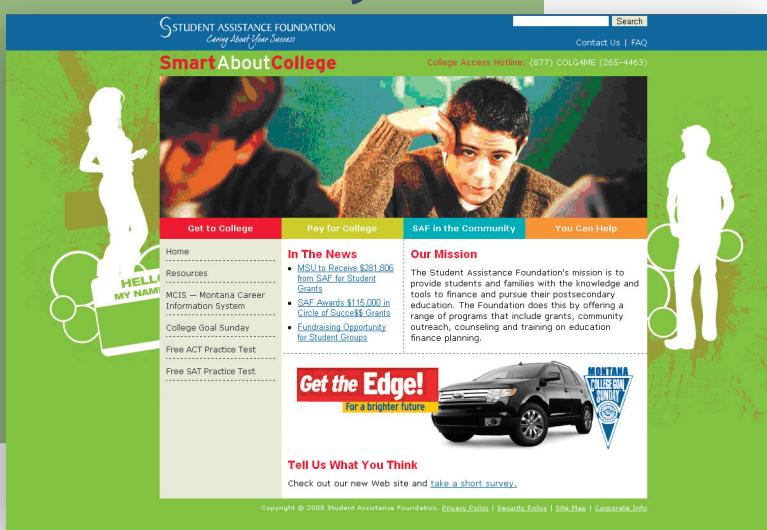
Montana nonprofit Student Assistance Foundation (SAF) recently launched two Web sites dedicated to providing students and their families with the tools and knowledge to attain their aspirations of higher education — www.SmartAboutCollege.org and www.knowhow2gomm.org.

"Many students think that college just happens. Unfortunately, it's not that simple," says Kelly Chapman, SAF's executive vice president of Foundation Activities. "Students need to take an active role in achieving that goal. These Web sites give Montana students a road map, and in so doing, empower them to shape their future."

The Smart About College Web site provides Montana families with one-stop shopping for college information. Students can research scholarships and programs, and parents can learn how to save and pay for college.

In addition, the site offers features including free practice ACT and SAT tests and access to the Montana Career Information System (MCIS). MCIS, sponsored by SAF and administered by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, allows students to complete aptitude tests, search colleges across the nation, and more.

The Montana KnowHow2Go Web site is an extension of a national initiative geared toward giving students and their parents clear instructions on how to pursue a college education.

A screenshot of the Smart About College website. The header features the text "STUDENT ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION" and "Smart About College". The main navigation menu includes "Get to College", "Pay for College", "SAF in the Community", and "You Can Help". Below the menu, there are sections for "In The News", "Our Mission", and "Tell Us What You Think". A banner for "Get the Edge!" features a black SUV. The footer contains copyright information and links to privacy policy, security policy, site map, and corporate info.

By providing steps for students beginning in middle school and ending in the senior year of high school, the site allows students to take the advice as far as they want on the road to college — academically and financially.

The site operates on the basis of four steps:

- Be a pain — in a good way.
- Push yourself and don't stop.
- Find the right fit.
- Put your hands on some cash.

KnowHow2GoMT is the first major undertaking for the Montana College Access Network. Network partners include SAF, TRIO, GEAR UP, Montana Postsecondary Educational Opportunities Council, Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program, the Governor's Office, and the Office of Public Instruction.

Student Assistance Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Montana corporation that provides students with knowledge and tools to finance and pursue their postsecondary education. Funds generated by SAF are returned to Montanans in the form of education grants and public benefit programs - to date more than \$10 million. For more information, visit www.safmt.org.



Scholarship Opportunity for Students!

The Billings Section of the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE), Inc. is pleased to announce the availability of scholarships to qualified high school seniors intending to enroll in petroleum related engineering curriculum. All high school seniors that are residents of Montana are eligible to apply. These scholarships are not need based. The recipients will be chosen based upon academic merit, extracurricular activities, recommendations,

and written essays. Four \$1000.00 scholarships will be awarded in the spring of 2008 and will be paid to the student's account at their school upon verification of enrollment in an accredited engineering curriculum. An application for the Billings Section Scholarship can be obtained at <http://billings.spe.org/> and is due on March 19, 2008.



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2,100 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of \$1.08 per copy, for a total cost of \$2,259.00, which includes \$1,271.00 for printing and \$988.00 for distribution.

Helena, MT 59624-1728

P.O. Box 1728

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